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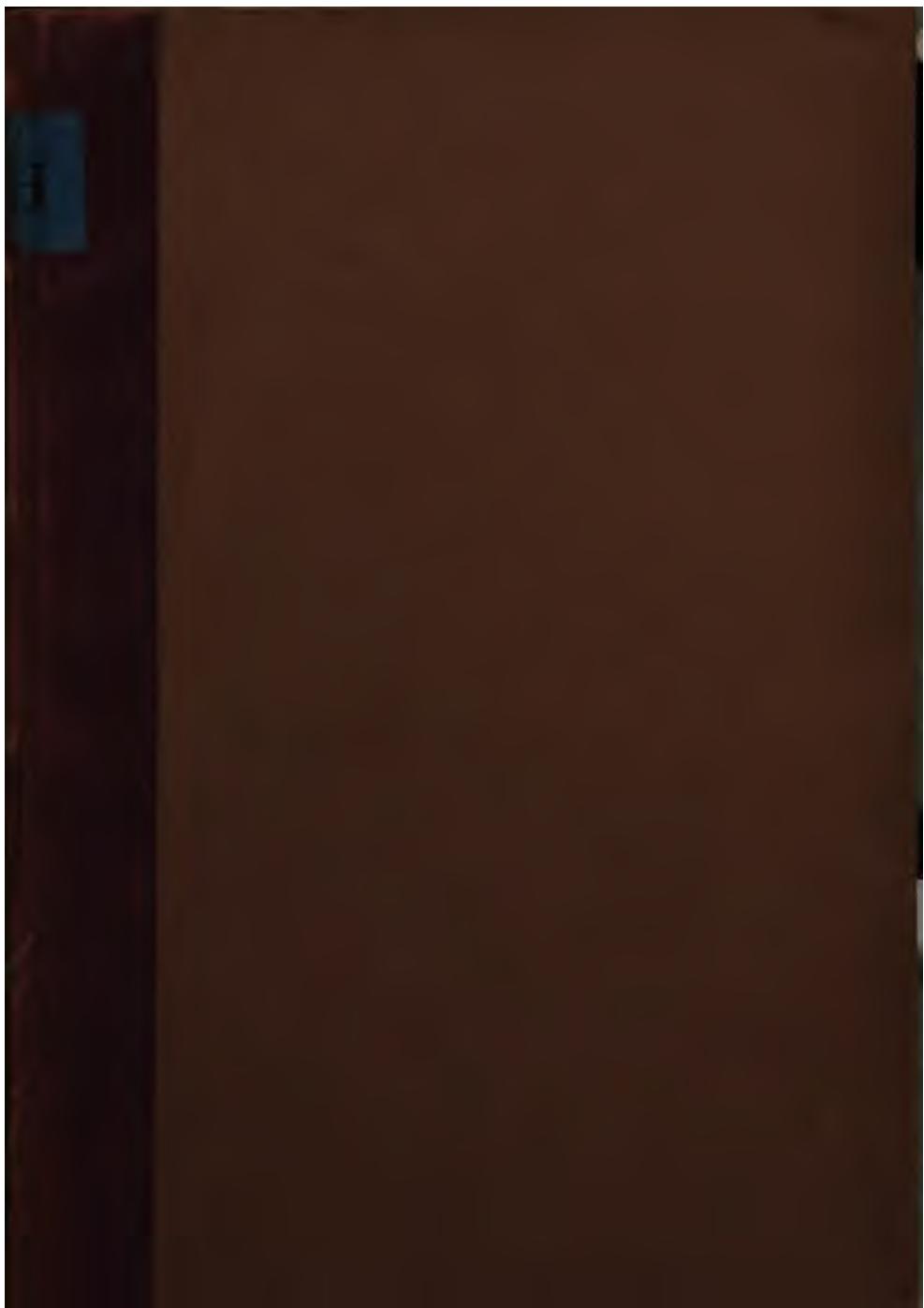
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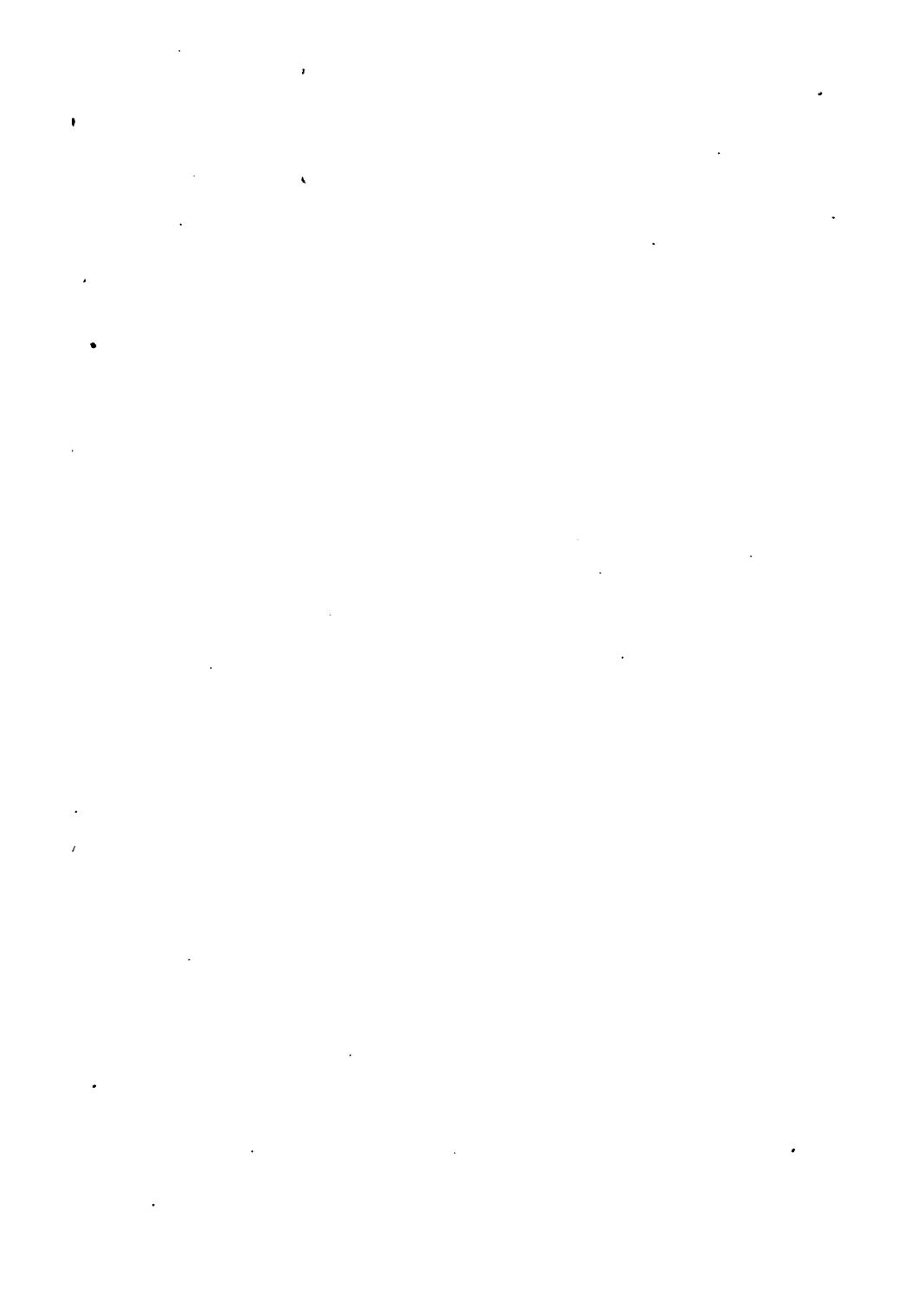
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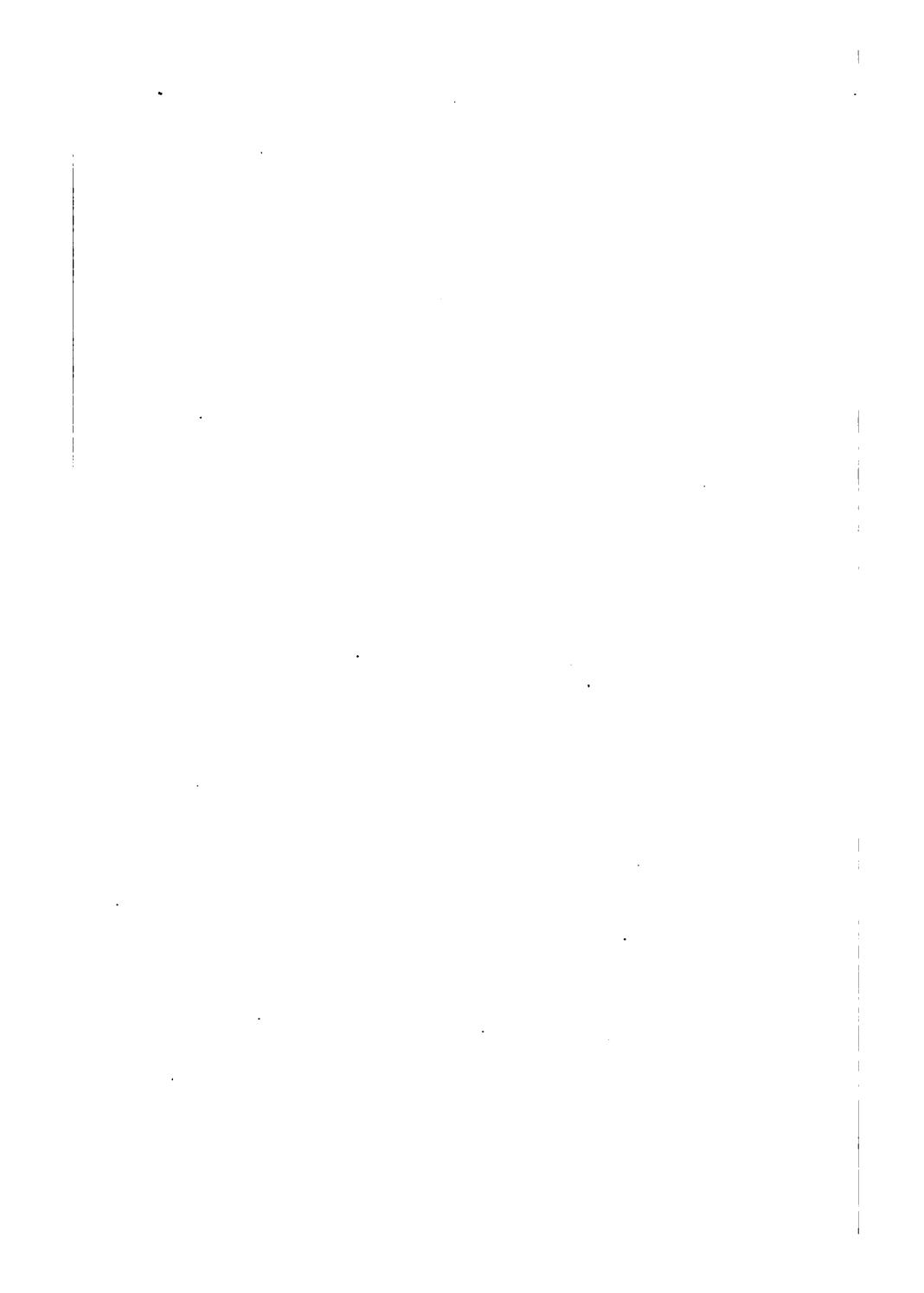
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THOUGHTS
UPON THE NECESSITY OF AN
Established Church,
AND THE
PROVIDING OF SUITABLE
EDUCATION FOR THE POOR,
AND MORE
CONVENIENT HABITATIONS.

BY A LAYMAN.

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THOUGHTS

UPON THE NECESSITY OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH, AND THE
UNHAPPY DISUNION WHICH ARISES FROM DISSENT.

—
BY A LAYMAN.
—

It has been the opinion of many, that an Established Church is unnecessary ; but, I ask, if we had no Established Church, how could we depend upon the observance of a Sabbath or any religious ordinance being performed in a solemn, or indeed in any manner? If no one was legally appointed to perform a Service, no one would be legally responsible, and neglect might ensue, which would be a loss particularly to those who most need instruction from preachers. The Canonicals worn by the Establishment are also necessary to strike reverential awe into the minds of the Congregation ; while we are Human beings, we are all affected more or less by outward appearances. Would a Judge upon the Bench appear anything like

so authoritative, if he was dressed in a plain suit like a Dissenting Preacher ? I contend not ; and as causes produce effects, the wearing of Canonicals or Ermine may have an effect to strike the mind with a solemnity to receive the admonition of the preacher or judicial functionary may give or adjudge, and as frail creatures we require every means that can be devised to influence our minds aright, and can any Dissenter or any other persuasion give me a reason why such costumes are improper, or point out a single instance where harm has or can arise from Canonicals being worn, then if no harm has or can arise, and there is a probability that good may, why should not all persuasions avail themselves of the chance of the probability.

I am not contending that the Established Church is pure, very far from it ; I believe it to be very impure ; and I believe that is the cause why we have so many Dissent from it. If the Church was what it ought to be, and what it professes to be, we should hear of but few Dissenting from it ; but, while there are characters in the Church who really are very deficient in regard to the management of their own family, it is natural to suppose they cannot be competent to direct

their Congregations aright; and Characters of this kind, are by no means reverential, of whatever persuasion they may happen to belong to. I respect all good men, whether they are Churchmen, Dissenters, or of whatever Sect or Faith; and it is only minds biased by prejudice and ignorance that do not. To dissent from the Church is to create a party; and as many sects of Dissenters as may happen to arise, so many parties may, as each Sect has its own interest in view: hence Jealousies, Quarrels, and Discontent ensue; therefore, reform the Church, and you would hear but little of Dissent: and if the Church had not required reform there would not have been Dissenters in such numbers. It is not reasonable that men would wish to be put to the expense of maintaining a new Establishment; as well as contribute to the old, if the old was what it ought to be, and what it professes to be. I am a Churchman, and by no means for destroying the Establishment; but for dismissing all those who do not do their duty, according to the rules of the Church, and conduct themselves reasonably towards their family, their Congregations, and their neighbours, living in charity

with all men, of all persuasions, that act honestly, and conduct themselves with propriety. Although I had left the Town I had long resided in but a few weeks, in that short time, the truth of the above remarks have been verified to the very letter; there have long been three large Dissenting Chapels, and from some difference of opinion, relative to the preaching, a party left the lower meeting, and about fifteen years past erected another Chapel, leaving the one they formerly belonged to by no means with a friendly or Christian-like spirit: and they yet continue a separate Congregation, and seem now to act very consistently. At this time all warmth, I expect, is allayed; but, within these few weeks, a friend of mine was applied to for a large old building, which had been for some years unoccupied: they agreed, and the party took possession, and now they use it as a place of worship for that Sect called the Primitive Methodist. A female opened the Chapel, by preaching three Sermons in one day. After that she committed the performance of the duties of the place to her followers: I believe generally itinerant preachers. The Eloquence of the female

astonished her hearers ; and the Congregations, attracted by this novelty, have excited the jealousy of the other Dissenters, realizing precisely my observation above, that as many sects, so many parties, and so many interests exist. And my friend has got himself into disgrace for letting them have the premises. Now who can say how soon another sect may arise, and come to the same town, fancying that the inhabitants are yet in Error, and that they can throw some new light upon the subject of the Duties of Man—as the proprietor of any Erection—to go round to every party of religionists, and ask them whether they will consent to have another New Chapel opened, and a Different Doctrine preached. I expect, from the present feeling, there would be an objection : and pray, who is to determine, but that the parties be respectively left to do exactly as they please, if there is to be liberty of conscience ; but from this little circumstance much information is to be obtained, and much light thrown upon a subject which requires to be studied by every well-wisher to the Church—in fact, to every well-wisher to rational Society ; for, I can hardly consider persons who attach themselves to such parties under a feeling that they

are exclusively right, as I know many do, scarcely under or within the pale of rational Society. Now, we know where the envy arises principally, and from what cause the respective Congregations, perhaps, do not like to lose their Members, nor their Preacher his Emoluments ! Now this is plain, and language which cannot be mistaken — it is too natural — and a place with nearly 6000 Inhabitants, may very properly be looked upon as an Epitome of the whole Kingdom ; and as Religion, and the provision made for the support and protection of it is in the mouth and mind of almost every one, Tithe, Church Rates, and every Due recognized by the Government, is becoming condemned by a very large portion of the People ; and do these people think that the abolition of these dues would make them either the richer or the happier—I contend they would not, for if the Clergy did not have the Tithe, some other party would, and it would make no difference to the people generally whatever. Many undertake to talk about Tithes who know but little about them. The Church Rates are really a trifle not worth contending about, compared to the advantage of having the Establishment, which they in part support. I agree with many, that,

some of the Church Dignitaries are richer than becomes their profession, and an alteration might very consistently be made, particularly when a preferment falls. And in the Ecclesiastical Courts—as far as relates to the Country—the most scandalous supineness and negligence exists; there are proofs enough of that in the Diocese of Lincoln, where neglect of the Execution of Ecclesiastical Decrees and Faculties, surreptitiously obtained, and such proceedings as are a great disgrace to the former Diocesan, and the then Archdeacon, and particularly the Official Principal—indeed, no party seem to have done their Duty but the Registrar, and Apparitor: for the Archdeacon failed very much in his Duty—still the fault is not in the Establishment itself, but in those whose duty is neglected, who compose the Establishment;—then why not reform them, and make them do their duty, or discharge them?—there, perhaps, the Government is deficient in its duty, to permit flagrant abuses to exist without any attempt to prevent or reform them.

The Dissenters, and all others, have had evidence enough of the neglect of the Bishop and Archdeacon in the Town, I allude to, at a former period; and reason enough. Every well-

wisher to the Church and civilized society, had to be sorry to see even the Vicar of that day disgrace himself, as he did upon this occasion, to lend his hand surreptitiously in direct defiance of the Archdeacon, who, at a Parochial Visitation held in the Church, had given a decree for certain alterations to be made, which the Vicar opposed and wrote against, threatening to raise his Tithe if the Parishioners complied with the Decree ; and so the matter has rested for more than twenty years, and many have never been in the Church since, nor never will any more. Now here seems good cause of complaint ; but even here is not sufficient shewn to prove the Establishment unnecessary ; it only shews that Characters have crept into the Church which never ought to have been admitted, and conducting themselves so unlike Churchmen, ought to have been dismissed, and perhaps punished. I think the present race of religionists are not satisfied, if their preacher does not please them in every respect ; and how is it possible, that a Minister, who endeavours to reform all classes, can please a whole Congregation composed of so many dispositions and views : he must have a most difficult Task indeed, and by no means an enviable one. I have known a

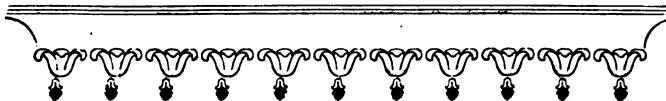
very respectable and worthy Preacher get himself into sad disgrace and disapprobation, by telling his Congregation that it was not so much their appearing before him upon a Sabbath, as their conduct in their Business and behind their counters, that he looked at. This pricked some of those who fancied themselves really Elect, to the Heart—and they communed with each other and left the Congregation, and divided away, and built another Chapel near enough to hear each other sing. Just so, may every Dissenting Preacher suffer annoyance, who preaches faithfully ; and just such troubles may fall to their lot, if they do not please their hearers, if their dependance lies entirely upon their Congregation. This, fortunately, happened not to be the case in this instance ; but much trouble and unhappiness it caused a very worthy man, and nearly the loss of his life ; and such like disputes, about Religion and Politics, makes the town, at all times, almost in an unhappy state ; each party envying the success of the other. Now, as two parties have arisen within about fifteen years in this town, who can calculate how many more are to arise in future, and of what description they may happen to be of. As new Sects are frequently arising,

how inconsistent must be the opinion of some, who think that preachers of all denominations are as worthy of being supported from some public source, as the Church. But, I wish to know, how a Government can draw any line where they should stop—there would be no end to contention ; and one party would then be sure to claim a superiority over the other ; for the different sects of Dissenters are, in their hearts, as much at variance with each other, as they are with the Church. In fact, they acknowledge that it is not the Church, but the improper manner in which the Church is supplied with Clergymen—Pluralities, Tithes, and many other evils. No one can deny but there are many abuses in the Church ; then, why do not the Dissenters, and all others, endeavour to get a remedy for all abuses in the Church, instead of secretly endeavouring to undermine, not only the Church, but the Constitution, and to make all England as divided and miserable, as this unhappy town, in every respect. For, neither at a private, nor a public house, can the different parties meet without entering upon their religious disputes, or political quarrels ; thereby making themselves uncomfortable, and those who would be comfortable, if it were not for their litigious and

dissatisfied Neighbours. So violent are the contending parties, that a Candidate at times cannot Canvas the Town without danger to his Life : the Laws cannot be executed without an opposition almost unparalleled in any other place. The New Poor Law Act required the presence of the Yeomanry, and the swearing in of nearly one hundred Special Constables, and Twenty Policemen from London, to get that carried into execution, after nearly killing one of the Magistrates : and all this violence in a Town overflowing with religious professors, and political opinions in proportion. Now, if every Town in England, were just constituted as this unhappy Town is—wretched, from party spirit, and persecuting those who differ in religious opinion and politics ; one party publishing amongst their own party, a recommendation “to assist each other, to deal with each other, to employ each other, to marry into the same party, and in fact, to form a separate Clan.” Now, what happiness can be expected to arise from a people so constituted—if every different sect is to form itself so exclusively, and to refrain from social intercourse with their Neighbours, who may happen to differ from them in their religious views. Is there anything

in the Scriptures to warrant such proceedings in — which I can scarcely call — a religious Congregation ? The real blessings of Christianity would be very questionable, if such commands emanated from it. This happening to be found in print, with the names of certain people to it, cannot for a moment be denied. Now if the Government of the Country had issued such an Edict to all Churchmen, to have formed themselves into a party exclusive of all others similarly, what would every sect of Dissenters have said ? They evidently in many respects, practise themselves, without scruple, what they would condemn in others, and the Church. If all England were as dis-united as this Town, the Government could not exist many months ; and, from the wreck of a nation, composed of such innumerable sects as our Kingdom is,—who can calculate, if the present System of Government was dissolved, how long it would be before another could be formed, or how long the different Sects would be contending for Superiority ?—perhaps, while the whole Nation was irretrievably ruined. Then, where would be the property of the fund-holder ? or, indeed, any other property ? Where would be the personal safety ? or any-

thing that is desirable? Are all these real benefits to be hazarded for the sake of non-essential points, which can never perhaps be cleared, merely because there are men of a discontented and unhappy disposition, many of whom have little or nothing to lose themselves, and are envious of those who have, and therefore wish to reduce all men to their level? This, depend on it, is the feeling of many, who are so active in promoting innovation, and so clamorous against Church and State: it cannot proceed entirely from a religious intention alone; that is clear to all who know them.



THOUGHTS

UPON EDUCATION FOR THE POOR.

WHAT a mistake it must be, in any Country, to Educate the Youth above the circumstances in which Providence has placed them. If, instead of spending the Public Money in giving the Lower Classes an Educa-

tion above their circumstances, they would raise a fund for Erecting Cottages, with three Rooms for Sleeping in, instead of both sexes of our Youth, and frequently their Parents, sleeping all in one Room ! It is useless to teach them Morality in Schools, and make no provision against their minds being corrupted, by both sexes being exposed to rest altogether in their Habitations — it is a national evil morally. It is certainly proper that Sabbath Schools should be maintained as heretofore—but the Erecting of sufficient Cottages is much more essential to their Morality and Comfort, than an Education above their circumstances in life, which is much more likely to unfit them for their station in Society than otherwise, as it gives them ideas which they can but very seldom realize; and is much more likely to make them discontented than happy.



